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To: Planning and Development Committee

RE: **Support HB5471** AN ACT REQUIRING ZONING REGULATIONS TO CONSIDER THE PRESERVATION OF FARM LAND, FOREST LAND AND OPEN SPACE.

Section 8-2 of the CT General Statutes enables Zoning Commissions. Zoning Commissions design and enact town regulations that operationalize the state-required Town Plan of Conservation and Development. Zoning regulations need to be consistent with the public policies expressed in Section 12-107a, providing a regulatory framework supportive of the continued sustainability and viability of agriculture and farming as defined in Section 1-1(q).

Agriculture is good for Connecticut. When Connecticut legislative leaders see that additional State control is necessary for the greater good of Connecticut citizens, "home rule" has historically been superseded. This happened with affordable housing, followed by cell phone towers, followed by noise control, all of which are now regulated by the State.

Agriculture in CT needs to be fostered and protected in order to make our State safe and sustainable. Currently it is threatened by the high value of land for residential suburban development, and the desire of urban transplants to preserve their view-shed at the expense of staying agricultural operations in time and making them unprofitable. This leads to the sale of agricultural land, further residential development, and negative town income flow as residential development spends \$1.10 in services for every dollar in taxes collected.

Legislation needs to be promulgated with regard to zoning regulations in order to protect agriculture from the "not in my backyard" urban mentality that often prohibits agricultural operations from updating their facilities and practices like other businesses, thereby rendering them unsustainable.

Agriculture makes us more secure by decentralizing our food sources and thereby protecting them from contamination, and making our food supply readily available. It is environmentally responsive as it reduces the State's carbon footprint, and preserves open space and wildlife habitat. It strengthens our State's economy by providing in-State jobs, bringing people into our state to spend money through agri-tourism, and by supporting other state business which sell the supplies, equipment, and services it needs. Agriculture enables residential community involvement because farmers live where they work, it teaches children and young adults life-skills, and it promotes healthy, happy outdoor living, a physically strong and active life, and an ethic of personal responsibility.

Sincerely,